

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

In attempting to make a public comment to my local Sinclair station, WSMH, Fox 66 in Saginaw, Michigan, the station affiliate refused my request to be able to leave a message for the station manager. She simply gave me an email address and, when I asked for her name, told me only "Suzanne", and promptly hung up. Surely this is not a behavior that reflects a commitment to serving the public interest.

Sinclair's actions (including the above example by it's Saginaw affiliate) show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.